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BC 150 YEARS
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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Attorney General
and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism

GRANTS TO CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF DIVERSITY IN B.C.

VICTORIA – As part of B.C.'s celebration of 150 years since its founding as a colony, the Ministry of Attorney General and BC150 Years will provide $200,000 for grants to support communities in telling the stories of Aboriginal and immigrant pioneers' contributions.

This one-time grant program was announced today by Tourism, Sport and the Arts Minister Stan Hagen and Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism Wally Oppal.

"The story of British Columbia is a story of many cultures," said Hagen. "It is a story of perseverance and hard work, of innovation and achievement. The mosaic grants will create a forum for people to tell their stories and honour their contributions as we together celebrate 150 years of shared history."

To support and encourage their efforts, communities and multicultural organizations will be able to apply to receive grants totalling $200,000 this year.

In addition to the stories of British Columbia's founding, the program will help tell the stories of struggles, people and personalities and of community milestone events and achievements that have shaped the province's identity.

"By honouring British Columbia's past, we also celebrate our rich cultural histories through these unique mosaic grants," Oppal said. "In raising public awareness about our diverse beginnings and past, we foster the building of welcoming and inclusive communities. These projects will demonstrate the benefits of cultural diversity to British Columbians and encourage newcomers to participate fully in local economies and community life."

Individuals, non-profit societies, community organizations, public institutions, municipalities and private enterprises are among eligible applicants. Projects will be funded for up to $10,000 and may include activities that:

- foster mutual understanding between aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities or between communities and new immigrants in building welcoming and inclusive communities;
- highlight the positive historical contributions of diverse communities in the past 150 years in British Columbia, as part of the BC150 Years celebrations;
- develop materials and resources such as tool kits, exhibits and documents;
- organize community forums, events and festivals with educational value; or
- establish the ability for cross-cultural dialogue.

The announcement is also part of WelcomeBC, an initiative supported by federal funding to enable the building of welcoming and inclusive communities.

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Further details about grant applications and criteria are posted on the Ministry of Attorney General website at www.ag.gov.bc.ca/immigration/service_providers.htm.

In 2008, B.C. will celebrate BC150 Years, the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Crown colony of British Columbia in 1858. Every community in B.C. is invited to participate in this year-long celebration of B.C.'s cultural diversity, community strength and achievement. For more information, please visit www.BC150.ca.

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